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THE  
ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

BELLES-LETTRES AND UNION PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES

OF

DICKINSON COLLEGE, CARLISLE, PA.,

JULY 19, 1837,

BY THE

HON. A. L. HAYES,  
GRADUATE MEMBER OF THE BELLES-LETTRES SOCIETY.

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Published at the request of both Societies.

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WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY GALES AND SEATON.

1837.



THE

*Peabody Institute*

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June 16 1927

DICKINSON COLLEGE, *July 19, 1837*

To the Hon A. L. HAYES

SIR: In behalf of the Belles-Lettres and Union Philosophical Societies, we return you their sincere thanks for the very able, eloquent, and instructive address, which you delivered before them this afternoon, in the Methodist Episcopal church, and request that you will favor us with a copy for publication.

Permit us, sir, to subscribe ourselves, with considerations of regard and friendship,

Yours, &c.,

WM. R. WOODWARD,	}	<i>Com. of the Belles Lettres Society.</i>
JOHN EMORY,		
T. T. WYSONG,	}	<i>Com. of the Union Philosophical So- ciety.</i>
WM. S. WATERS,		
JOHN LYON,		
B. H. CREVER,		

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MANSION HOUSE HOTEL, *July 20, 1837*

GENTLEMEN: In compliance with your request, on behalf of the Belles-Lettres and Union Philosophical Societies, I furnish you with a copy of the address delivered before them.

I thank you, gentlemen, for the terms in which you have been pleased to express their wishes; and I cordially reciprocate your sentiments of regard.

Very truly yours, &c.,

A. L. HAYES.

TO MESSRS. WM. R. WOODWARD,  
J. EMORY,  
T. T. WYSONG,  
WM. S. WATERS,  
JOHN LYON,  
B. H. CREVER.





## ADDRESS.

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*Gentlemen of the Literary Societies of Dickinson College :*

However interesting it might prove to the speaker, to dilate upon the various subjects and excellent works which the scheme of collegiate instruction embraces, any review of these, within the limits of an address, would necessarily be too general, to afford either profit or entertainment to others. It is merely proposed, therefore, in the remarks that are more particularly designed for the junior portion of my hearers, to present some reflections upon the utility of the ancient classics, especially as constituting a principal department of a liberal education.

The agency, which the productions of Grecian and Roman learning exercised in the revival of letters, must forever commend them to the veneration of enlightened minds. Their restoration from the cells of the monasteries, in which they were for ages immured, and where they had been preserved from the barbarian spoilers of the Roman empire, roused the dormant energies of the European intellect, and served more than any other cause, to dispel the thick darkness which followed the desolating irruptions of the Goths into Italy. Such was the admiration excited by this resurrection of ancient genius, that for some centuries after, all other studies and literary occupation, were deemed trivial and unimportant. The recovered works of the Greek and Roman poets, historians, and philosophers, were thought to comprise, whatever was desirable for the instruction and accomplishment of the understanding, and the improvement of morals. They were dignified with the appellation of humanities, *literæ humaniores*, implying their superior, if not exclusive excellence. And whoever dedicated themselves to the study, received the corresponding title of *humanists*, as exhibiting the meliorating influence of their pursuits :

Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.

The progress of the useful arts compelled, at length, some degree of attention, in the systems of education, to mathematical and physical

studies; but the text-books of science were for a long time published and studied in Latin, which continued, until no very remote period, to be the exclusive language of scientific and philosophical treatises. With the gradual improvement of the modern languages a party arose, who proceeded from denying the propriety of learning the sciences in a foreign tongue, to question the utility of making the ancient and dead languages an object of general education; contending that the period of youth, devoted to the acquisition of Greek and Latin, would be much better employed in acquiring the mathematical and physical sciences, and the many branches of daily useful knowledge. This party, to distinguish them from the humanists, were called philanthropists. Both sides pushed their peculiar dogmas (as adverse parties generally do) to the opposite extremes, whilst truth and reason occupied their appropriate sphere in the midst.

The philanthropists have been constantly gaining ground and increasing in numbers; but we rarely meet with or hear of any, who can be considered as belonging to the other party. The opinions of the former, are frequently seen in various publications, and have been embraced by some men of distinguished abilities. In an able discourse delivered in the Miami University, in 1834, their doctrine was honored with the advocacy of a learned and patriotic citizen of South Carolina, whose immediately subsequent and premature death was a loss to the country. The gentleman alluded to, the late Mr. Grimké, of Charleston, enjoyed a high literary celebrity on account of his superior intellectual powers and extraordinary cultivation. The same doctrine has been recently maintained, to a considerable extent, in a course of lectures by an eminent author, George Combe, Esquire, of Edinburgh; who has presented an American edition of his work to the people of the United States, for their particular edification.

To come nearer home: the late Mr. Girard, in prescribing regulations for his college, says, in reference to the introduction of the Latin and Greek languages, that he does not forbid them, yet he does not recommend them. To which may be added, (what I most of all and on every account regret,) that a committee in our Legislature, reporting upon an application for aid by some of our academies and colleges, among other reasons for rejecting it, repudiated their claim to public assistance, on the ground that these are aristocratic institutions! The learning which they inculcate must, of course, as I suppose, have been considered by the committee as aristocratic learning!

It will be perceived, then, that in the endeavor to maintain the standing of the ancient literature in our seminaries, we have real opponents, most of whom are not merely indifferent, but are hostile to the tuition

of the ancient languages, deeming the time bestowed upon their acquisition as little better than absolutely wasted.

Admitting the impropriety of devoting an exclusive or the same attention to them as was considered necessary, when they were the only avenues to science, I yet hold that there cannot be any substitute or equivalent for these languages, and that they cannot be superseded, without irreparable injury to the cause of education and of mind.

It would be an error, undoubtedly, to suppose that the immature intellects of the very young, cannot reason at all ; it is equally erroneous to imagine, (and a mistake unfortunately too much carried into practice,) that they are capable of extended processes of mathematical, philosophical, or metaphysical reasoning, or the just apprehension of abstract propositions. The mind begins very early to form judgments, though its reasonings are limited by its means of comparison, which before the age of puberty are necessarily simple, being furnished, for the most part, by the immediate sensations arising from impressions of external objects. It is active at this age, but its excursions are short ; it reasons frequently, but the links in the chains of its deductions are few. The power of generalization is not yet acquired ; hence its inaptitude to comprehend abstract definitions. It requires exercise suited to its feebleness, in order to develop its faculties ; and this should be the object of a proper course of instruction to supply. The best education, is that which provides the best means for this purpose.

Academical instruction must, of necessity, be elementary. The notion that youth can be qualified, either in primary schools or colleges, to assume at once the practice of any of the professions or callings of active life, surprises by its extreme simplicity. The real business of men is made up of practical and minute details, which nothing but experience in business can teach. A proposition so evident, every mind is ready to admit ; and yet the idea to which we have adverted, has influenced, in no inconsiderable degree, the opinion of those who condemn the study of the ancient languages. It has manifestly swayed the speculations of the philosophic Mr. Combe. "A young lady," says he, "who can draw a very handsome cottage, could not rear a fabric corresponding to it. She is not an architect ; and the difference between her and an architect consists in this : that she is defective in all the practical knowledge, skill, and experience, which are indispensable to render her design an actual house. A scholar in Greek and Latin is not a man of business, for a similar reason. He is not instructed in that knowledge of affairs and things that exist—the knowledge of which constitutes practical business."

Now, all that education in seminaries of learning ever can, or ever

proposed to teach, are the rudiments of that knowledge, and the principles of those sciences, which are connected with the duties and affairs of the world; and it is no objection to say that a student, however well accomplished in these rudiments and principles, is unable to build a house, construct a bridge or a steam engine, to write a sermon, plead a cause, or heal the diseases "that flesh is heir to." It is enough, if by means of such culture, a young man can learn to perform all these things, both much sooner and much better than he could possibly do without it; and this advantage, as the result of education, candor will always concede.

From the mutual relation and dependence of the arts and sciences, he who begins the study of the former, with a knowledge of the principles upon which they are founded, and which it is the business of the latter to inculcate, has already mastered the greatest difficulty of the undertaking. He has the same advantage over one who enters upon the task without this knowledge, that the mariner, acquainted with navigation, and having a compass, has over another who, having no knowledge of the principles of sailing, attempts to navigate without either chart or compass to direct his course.

With regard to those professions which depend chiefly upon the intellect, education affords to the student not only much auxiliary knowledge, but the mental discipline, which is equivalent to dexterity in the mechanic arts; so that, like the musician who applies himself to some new instrument, he finds all his previous acquirements and skill invaluable, facilities in his new undertaking. I am aware that this is answering the objection, as if it were urged against education in general. And such, in truth, is the character which it assumes, since the business of life can no where be taught, except where it is transacted—in the office, the workshop, the counting-house, or the field.

But during those tender years, (from nine to fourteen,) whilst the mind as well as the body, is incapable of the severe and protracted exertions which are adapted to the maturity of manhood, whilst its powers are still feeble and its faculties not yet fully unfolded, I much doubt whether those studies, which are considered as more intimately related to the business of life, can be usefully or judiciously pursued. The rules of arithmetic, the problems of geometry, mensuration, and surveying, and the definitions of grammar, may, like any other abstractions, be conned over and committed to memory—all to little purpose. Being imperfectly comprehended at so early an age, the knowledge thus acquired, vanishes with the recollection of the words in which it was conveyed: *haud inexpertus loquor*.

In my humble judgment, no course of studies has ever been suggested

or devised, which is so well suited to this period of youth, as that of the Latin and Greek languages. The daily routine of the exercises gives that wholesome employment to the faculties, which, by tasking them not overmuch, is best adapted to their gradual development. The memory is regularly and constantly exerted, so as most effectually to improve its twofold virtue, *facile percipere et fideliter continere*, readiness of reception and faithful retention. The analysis of sentences, required to ascertain their proper construction, furnishes suitable exercise to this faculty, as well as to the judgment and reason, every application of a syntactical rule being, in truth, an instance of practical logic, to the comprehension of which the young mind, with moderate diligence, finds itself perfectly adequate; whilst the selection from many various definitions of that which is best adapted to render the meaning of the author, involves a consideration of the subject-matter and the context, and is well calculated to sharpen the sagacity and increase the vigor of the intellect. Add to this, the imagination is excited and gratified by the most pleasing and splendid imagery, and the moral feelings are exercised in the contemplation of examples of filial piety, heroic fortitude, devoted patriotism, and godlike justice, which have crowned the human character with the brightest lustre. By thus nourishing the understanding and affections "with food convenient for them," they are gradually expanded with the natural growth of the body, and with it attain a sound maturity, more likely to produce good fruit, than if forced to premature luxuriance by any hotbed process of modern invention. The fact, that in the most civilized nations, these two languages have, for six centuries been employed as an essential part of the instruction of youth, in their highest seminaries, is only to be accounted for by the intrinsic excellence of the discipline itself.

But the utility of these studies, exists not in their adaptation alone to the youthful mind. They are eminently beneficial in assisting us to an accurate knowledge of our own language; so that it may be truly affirmed, that the easiest and readiest way of thoroughly learning the English, is by acquiring the Greek and Latin tongues; the structure of which, is so regular and simple, and the connexions and analogies are so marked, as to present the best illustration of the general principles of philology which are common to all languages, and with which, every student, in mastering these, necessarily makes himself familiar.

The advantages of a knowledge of the modern European languages, especially the French, Spanish, Italian, and German, have not been disputed, and are unquestionable. The three former, being offsprings of the Latin, half the labor of their acquisition is saved to the student, who is acquainted with the parent language; and the same habits of study,



which have conquered the difficulties of the ancient languages, will have smoothed the path to the attainment of the latter.

Most of the sciences which have grown up in modern times, have their nomenclatures framed from the Greek and Latin. Botany, for instance, has derived its terminology from the Latin, and chemistry its terminology from the Greek; to these, also, are both law and medicine much indebted for most of their technical terms. Although it will not be contended, that a knowledge of the ancient languages is indispensable to the student, who would make himself master of any of these sciences, yet it were vain to deny, that such knowledge greatly facilitates his progress, and imparts superior accuracy to his acquirements.

To these obvious and practical uses of the learned languages, as a part of a liberal education, may be added other, and perhaps higher recommendations. Among all the ancient nations of the earth, the Greeks and Romans, are those, who have left the most enduring monuments of their wisdom and virtue. Many of the arts, which are allowed by all to do the greatest honor to human genius, were carried amongst them to a height of excellence which has never been, and may never be surpassed. The remains of their works in architecture and sculpture, have been regarded and sought as invaluable treasures; and the most ambitious efforts of succeeding generations, have aimed at no more than a successful imitation of these incomparable models. The Greek literature, contains the most perfect poems, dramas, orations, philosophical treatises and histories; and the language itself is, according to the universal opinion of the learned, the most copious, flexible, sonorous, and elegant, that has ever graced the tongue or the pen.

In Greece, too, men first attained a knowledge of the principles of regulated freedom; and there the problem of the capacity of large communities to govern themselves without tyrants, kings, or masters under any other name, was originally demonstrated. It was to the spirit of enlightened *freedom*, that their wonderful achievements in arts and arms may be ascribed. It was this, that produced that illustrious race of statesmen, poets, generals, philosophers, statuarys, and architects, who have shed an imperishable lustre upon the name of Greece, and made her the instructress of Europe and the world. It was the instinct of her well-informed democracy, to assign the first places in the state to men of the greatest renown for talents and worth, conscious that by this means only their title to self-government, could be vindicated in the eyes of mankind. They knew that their prosperity depended upon the ability and integrity with which their affairs were administered; and conceding to rulers the homage due to the chosen depositories of the national authority, they willingly yielded to their mandates the obedience required

by the laws. Such was Greece in the days, brilliant though few, of her highest glory, when Attica gave light and guaranteed liberty to her sister states, and her citizens were regarded as equal to the princes of other lands. The result was seen in the matchless energy with which a people, by no means numerous, inhabiting a territory of small extent, overcame the most powerful monarchies, and destroyed the largest armies that were ever arrayed upon the field of battle. But they were unacquainted with those guards, which modern policy has devised to control power within safe limits and prevent usurpation, and with those principles of confederation which, by a felicitous union of distinct sovereignties in a general and national government, give symmetry and strength to our compound republic. Whilst their rulers were truly patriotic, and the mass were virtuous, they attained the pinnacle of prosperity. But they trusted too much, and were betrayed; the spirit of party degenerated into faction; liberty ran into licentiousness; and the demagogues became first the flatterers and favorites, and then the enslavers of their fellow-citizens. The contests of factions and the triumph of lawless force over freedom, are displayed, in broad lights, in the history of this extraordinary people.

Nor is the argument deducible from the history and literature of Rome, of inferior validity. The Roman history is even more important, in some respects, than the Grecian. The events are better ascertained, the narratives more authentic. We have a nearer view of the Romans, who were the last link of the ancient world, with which the moderns immediately connect; and the rise, progress, and decay of their empire, afford the most striking illustration of the advantages resulting from the practice of fortitude, justice, patriotism, industry, and temperance, and the misery and degradation that ensue upon the neglect of these manly virtues.

Another important lesson, is furnished by this history: it is the instability of empire founded upon conquest. The spirit of conquest was the soul of the Roman policy. Amidst all their internal changes and convulsions, they preserved a constant determination to acquire universal dominion. They elected their kings; they expelled them; chose consuls; elected decenvirs; substituted tribunes; and, finally, surrendered their liberties to the Cæsars. A contest for privileges between the patricians and plebeians, was long carried on with various success. Dictators seized the government, and deluged the streets of Rome with the blood of her citizens. But under every condition of prosperous or adverse fortune, this warlike people still looked forward to the subjugation of foreign states. They had organized conquest and victory; and, from an inconsiderable tribe collected together upon the banks of the Tiber,

where they founded their great city, having grown into a mighty nation, they extended their arms far and wide, so that in seven hundred years their eagles had penetrated every known region, and Rome became the undisputed mistress of the world.

Mark what followed. The wealth of plundered nations accumulated in Rome and Italy, corrupted the citizens, who sold their freedom; and those legions, whose disciplined valor had subdued every enemy, next turned their arms upon their own country, seized the government, and exposed it at auction to the highest bidder. When the legions, in their turn, sank under the enervating influence of luxury, they fell an easy prey to the hardy barbarians of the north, who ravaged Italy with fire and sword; and in far less time than that in which the Romans had reared their mighty empire, the entire fabric was tumbled into ruins by the rude shock of their Gothic invaders.

But *arma cedant togæ, concedat laurea linguæ*. The stern conquerors of Rome, though they annihilated her power, succumbed to her wisdom. They adopted her jurisprudence to regulate their civil administration; and to this day it continues to be the foundation of the civil codes over all the continent of Europe.

In the departments of poetry, philosophy, and eloquence, the Romans were inferior, and hardly inferior, to the Greeks; in history and criticism, they equalled if they did not surpass them.

I regard as a most essential advantage, derivable from the cultivation of this ancient literature, that it is particularly adapted to form sound intellectual habits and a correct taste. The works put into the student's hands, are the productions of those who were considered by their countrymen and contemporaries as the most gifted, prudent, and virtuous of men; and this judgment has been confirmed by every succeeding age to the present time. The reading of an author in a foreign language, from the necessary care required in ascertaining the exact sense, induces a more minute survey of his sentiments, than the perusal of the same ideas expressed in our own language. It is hardly possible to be conversant for years with such minds, without becoming familiar with their modes of thinking, and imbued with their sentiments. The ancient wisdom, in the process of study, is transfused in various degrees into the minds of ingenuous students, and by a species of intellectual amalgamation, is made their own. These works, which have stood the test of time, and chance, and change, and been always regarded as the true standards of style, have, by furnishing the best exemplars of composition in the various fields of literature, imparted all that rhetoric can teach, for enabling us to give a just expression to our conceptions.

As in building, the Grecian and Roman orders have been deemed to



have left nothing to be desired, and are constantly appealed to for determining the propriety of architectural proportions, so in criticism, any new production, is estimated according to those immortal compositions which universal consent for twenty centuries, has established as the true classical standards of taste and fine writing. The benefits resulting from the possession of such models, are incalculable. There is no possibility of saying, to what the extravagances of fashion and fancy and eccentricity of peculiar humors might lead, if these illustrious examples were not always at hand, to warn us against a departure from nature, of which the ancients were most accurate observers, and in a conformity to which—or, in other words, in *simplicity*, that last perfection of style—they chiefly excelled. The tendency to deviate in the minor and obvious essentials of our language, with respect to which, all admit the necessity of fixed and permanent rules, is constantly perceived in new-fangled terms and phrases, new orthography, and new systems of orthöepy. Such efforts demonstrate the *cacöethes mutandi*, (the disease of our times;) though, in relation to the points adverted to, the utility of adhering to the received standard is so manifest, that we may say, without I trust compromising our patriotism, it will be long before we need an American dictionary of the English language. But the higher qualities of style, are not under the protection of the same constant and ready perception of utility. These are left to the guardianship of cultivated taste and learned criticism, whose canons are founded on the productions of classic genius in the two ancient languages under consideration. “I am persuaded (said the judicious Dr. Blair) that in proportion as the ancients are generally studied and admired, or are unknown and disregarded, in any country, good taste and good composition will flourish or decline.”

Should it occur to any who hears these remarks, that an exclusive attention to language will but inform the mind with sounds and signs, whilst it remains barren of useful knowledge, (and this is the burden of Mr. Combe’s objection,) I would say, in the first place, that such exclusive attention is by no means recommended: all we contend for is the maintenance of the ancient languages, as a material part of a liberal education. But I do not admit the consequence suggested, though far from favoring the course of which it is predicated. The association between language and ideas, is too close for such a result. It must not be forgotten that “if things are the sons of Heaven, words are the daughters of earth;” and it is impossible to become intimately acquainted with signs, without learning much of the *things signified*.

The crigetical method of instruction, (which is extensively, and ought in my opinion to be universally introduced,) by which every thing connected with the subject of the recitation is explained to the pupil,

imparts a great variety of interesting and important information, in addition to the mere knowledge of the language. In this way, the history, the customs, and the literature, of those pre-eminent nations, of which we have spoken, are imbibed without much apparent labor, at the same time that a study of their languages, furnishes exercise to the expanding mind, the most appropriate and agreeable to its immature strength, and the best adapted duly to unfold and improve its faculties; preparing it, like the well-trained soldier, for every exigency of future service.

Freely conceding, as I do, the importance of mathematical and philosophical studies, both in the knowledge they procure, and the habits of persevering and incumbent application which they superinduce, I nevertheless insist upon the ancient discipline, in which the master minds of a Bacon, a Milton, a Newton, a Blackstone, a Hamilton, and a Madison, were trained, to adorn our language and enlighten their fellow-men.

If among those whom I have as yet more particularly addressed, there be none who have harbored a doubt of the excellence of this discipline, I have only to say, in the words of our great dramatist, that

—— “Truth can never be confirm’d enough,  
Tho’ doubts did ever sleep.”

But if there be one, who has brought to the study of the ancient languages a reluctant mind, from any preconceived notion of their inutility, and who may be led by my suggestions to change his opinion, and apply himself with new alacrity and vigor, I shall not think my slight labor entirely lost.

To those who have just ended their collegiate career, and now turn their eyes upon the prospect before them, it would be an object of solicitude to anticipate, were it possible, the things and events which are concealed by the shadows resting upon the future.

When the illustrious discoverer of America was preparing for his great enterprise, he anxiously sought for information in all directions. He had studied the theories of philosophers, the published accounts of navigators and travellers, and had collated the charts of numerous voyages; but fraught as he was with whatever knowledge these sources could supply, he did not disregard the simple statements of mariners, who had been driven by tempests and stress of weather, far into the unknown and mysterious ocean he was about to explore. We may imagine with what eager interest, he listened to the artless narrative of their observations upon the nature of the currents and of the winds, the color of the sea, the flights of birds, the drift wood, and even the sea weed which they had seen floating upon the distant western wave—circumstances, which to others might have appeared trivial and uninteresting, but which he

carefully registered in his memory, as useful indications to guide his contemplated voyage across the boundless deep.

In that dim, misty ocean, the future, upon which you are about to embark—notwithstanding all you have found recorded concerning the voyage of life, its difficulties and its destination; though you may have examined the charts which profess to designate the rocks, the whirlpools, and the quicksands that endanger its course, and studied the theories which set forth the currents and undercurrents, the winds that vex, and the calms that stagnate, the surface—you would still be inclined, (if I may judge of your feelings by a recollection of my own,) to lend your attention to the actual observations of those who have entered upon the same voyage before you, and who, like the seamen consulted by Columbus, may furnish some notices, from what has been witnessed in the past, by which you may possibly be enabled, the more safely and prosperously, to pursue your future career. “The thing that hath been is that which *is*, and that which *is done* is that which *shall* be done.”

The first discovery made, after emerging from college, is the apparent desire of those with whom a young man begins to mingle in the intercourse of the world, to learn his character—in other words, his temper, habits, sentiments, and principles of conduct; a knowledge of which furnishes them with a guide for their conduct and deportment towards him. Hence a fair character is essential to success in life, which must, more or less, depend upon the confidence and esteem of others. Be careful to cherish thoughts and sentiments, worthy of a generous mind. “If one were so unhappy (said the Marchioness de Lambert to her son) as to want an honest heart, one ought, for one’s own interest, to correct it.” “Nothing makes a man truly valuable but his heart, and nothing but that can make him happy. There his true greatness lies. The heart must be elevated by aspiring to great things, and daring to think ourselves worthy of them.”

It is a fatal mistake to set out with the belief, that one’s real disposition and character, can be long concealed from the world. However difficult it may be to know ourselves, (and the *gnothi seauton*,\* is confessedly difficult as well as important,) it is more difficult to prevent others from knowing us. He who thinks to succeed by dissimulation, most of all deludes himself; and nothing is more true than the reflection of Rochefoucault, that men are never so easily deceived as when they try to deceive others. The cunning man betrays his want of capacity, by the very means he takes to accomplish his purpose of deception. He underrates the sagacity of others, at the same time that he overrates his own, holding their intelligence as nothing in comparison with his superior clever-

\* Γνωθι σεαυτον.

ness ; and while he imagines he is invisibly pulling the wires behind an impenetrable screen, unconsciously discloses to their vigilant inspection the complicated machinery of his illusions. Nor does he perceive that the success of deception can only, at best, be temporary ; that suspicion once awakened, and confidence withdrawn, his power is at an end. The community is put on its guard against all future attempts ; forewarned, it is forearmed. The *folly* of that sinister *wisdom*, called cunning, is in nothing more manifest, than in the labors and toil it encounters to procure, through by-ways and by crooked means, the estimation which straight-forward honesty attains without cost or effort.

Scrupulous integrity in our dealings, and strict veracity in our communications, form the basis of a character qualified to ensure trust and confidence, and are essential, indeed, to all human excellence. Super-added to these, diligence in one's vocation, benevolence, sincerity, liberality, temperance, and fortitude, present a cluster of practical virtues which all can appreciate, and which will render success in life sure and decided. Such virtues, indeed, springing from Christian charity and Christian faith, not only secure the respect and confidence of men, but furnish the strongest support of individual happiness—"our being's end and aim."

Regular employment is the price of happiness ; and the first step, in general, after taking leave of our *alma mater*, is the adoption of a profession. No matter how bountifully Fortune may have showered her gifts, some settled occupation is essential to real enjoyment. Without this, the mind, like an idle sword, is corroded by its own rust. Who has ever known a perfectly indolent, that was not a miserable man? There is in this country no class of men of fortune, whose only care in life is to kill time and squander money, and who, associating together, may keep each other in countenance, though they cannot purchase contentment.

" Vain, idle, delicate, in thoughtless ease,  
Reserving woes for age, their prime they spend;  
All wretched, hopeless, in the evil days,  
With sorrow, to the verge of life they tend.  
Griev'd with the present, of the past ashamed,  
They live, and are despised ; they die, nor more are nam'd."

The misery of such a condition was illustrated in the fate of the Frenchman, who, with rank and high connexions, ample fortune, youth, health, repute, and "troop of friends," found life without employment so "weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable"—one dull, daily routine of rising, dressing, eating, drinking, sleeping—that he preferred death by his own hand, to its longer endurance. Something of the feeling which pre-

capitated the fate of this wretched suicide, must have been experienced by every man, who has had the misfortune to live in the world, without any thing in the world to do. I hold it, therefore, to be of the last importance, to adopt an occupation, though I have nothing to say with respect to the choice of a profession, except that it should be such, as one will probably be satisfied with after it is made.

Some difference will always exist in the degree of consideration which various occupations enjoy, owing to the unequal degrees of skill and intelligence required by them; but true ambition would rather impart honor to one's profession, than seek to derive respectability from it. Our country is fortunately exempt from those castes, which separate society elsewhere into distinct compartments, to each of which a peculiar occupation or pursuit, is by law or custom assigned. Here all professions, trades, and callings, are open. The only limitation, is imposed by mental or physical inability; and one striking and important benefit of the liberal education you have received is, that it has made you *freemen* in the most extensive sense; for, qualified by it, as you are, to enter upon any profession,

“The world is *all* before you, where to choose.”

A man of cultivated mind and real virtue, can never have his lustre soiled by any honest vocation well pursued. It is, indeed, far from being a disadvantage, to possess abilities superior to the requisitions of one's calling. By the proper exertion of these, he is sure of rising to distinction in his pursuit, and of reaping all the benefit it may confer. A young painter having attracted Sir W. Scott's notice and protection, by some pictures he had produced in his apprenticeship, was inclined, on the expiration of his indentures, to turn his back on the humble profession to which he had been bred; but, waiting upon his eminent friend with a piece he had been commissioned to paint, received this salutary advice: that he should apply himself to the improvement of his profession, as a much more lucrative field of exertion, instead of struggling with the difficulties that he must be sure to meet, for want of sufficient patrimony, in following the higher walks of art. The individual to whom this counsel was given, having accordingly turned his talents to study the science of his profession, has produced a highly commended work on the laws of harmonious coloring; and, instead of being a third or second rate artist, trembling with nervous apprehension about the position in which a picture may be hung at an exhibition, as really affecting his prospects in life, is the master of a large establishment, giving employment to a great number of men.

A more illustrious example is furnished by the life of “Scotland's greatest man” himself. When he saw his literary pre-eminence endan-



gered by the declining popularity of his poetical works, and especially by the appearance of Lord Byron as a rival, he, with that good sense in which he so much excelled, resolved to abandon the bright field of poesy for the humbler region of romance. The consequence was, that he became more popular in that career than he had ever been as a poet; and, having distanced all competition, erected there the most noble monuments of his fame.

These are instances in which ambition, guided by judgment, has exhibited its best fruits, both in relation to the individual and the public.

I refrain from the attempt to lay down any rule for the choice of a profession, not only because it might be a presumptuous interference with determinations already adopted, or the wishes of friends which ought not to be disregarded, but because I deem it of less consequence what the choice may be, than that a choice should be made and pursued in the right spirit. Excellence in one's art or calling, is the first requirement of professional duty. The disposition to excel, may arise from a calculation of profit or a desire of accumulation; a motive which is honest, and, if the object be personal independence, is altogether laudable. It may arise from a desire of distinction or a love of glory, which is a sentiment that deserves our favor, for it has unquestionably been productive of some of the best and noblest actions recorded in history. It is commonly found in union with a generous enthusiasm, which will not rest satisfied with a mediocrity of exertion, which keeps the mind always fresh, active, and vigorous, and exhibits the evidences of improvement to the latest period of life. It is reported of the celebrated Mr. Wirt, who possessed this fine spirit in an eminent degree, that some of his last professional efforts were superior to any of his previous performances; and that this was observable, not only in the substance of his addresses, but even in the finish and decoration of the style. I know not how others may be affected, but to me nothing appears more admirable, than this progressive excellence in advanced age. It is a splendid triumph of mind over matter, and points unerringly to our immortal destination.

Every one should have constantly in view a standard of merit in his profession, and should stimulate his exertions to realize it in his own performances. Let such a standard be as perfect as it may—the beau ideal of professional excellence; for no axiom is more just, than that all models should be perfect, though man remains imperfect, that in striving to reach what is *impossible*, he may attain to what is *uncommon*. Thus, by furnishing an example of superior skill and ability, by useful improvements in the practice of his art, or by enlarging the boundaries of the science connected with it, he best discharges that debt which every man owes to his profession.

Whatever profession a young man may have adopted, he finds himself on his arrival at that stage of existence, his majority, "when youth elate steps into life," placed in a new relation to society. He is now a citizen, a constituent member of a republican Government, which was formed by that great body in which the potential sovereignty every where resides—the people. Of the constituent power, he perceives that he is a part; a unit, indeed, but one of an ascertainable number, the grand aggregate sum of equal and independent electors. He perceives that government is a trust, or grant of powers by the people, as specified in the constitution, and consists of the constituency or body of electors and the administrative departments, executive, legislative, and judiciary. The conduct or operation of the Government, is the result of the just execution of the powers thus granted, by all the constituted agents—the electors and the magistrates of the several departments.

The constitution, the only legitimate *vox populi* amongst us, has made no provision in case of the failure of electors to perform their duty, whilst it has limited the duration of executive and legislative appointments, fixing the time of their termination as well as commencement. With the strictest propriety, therefore, are the electors to be considered, in their relation of constituents, as a part of the Government, since their action is essential to its subsistence. They are the *motive* power, without which, the state engine can neither be put nor kept in operation; and the universal neglect or omission of their duty, would necessarily involve society in a condition of anarchy and wild disorder, *sine legibus, sine imperio*. In this view of the elective franchise, I do not think it is overrating the duty of the elector, to say that it is not of inferior importance to that of the administrative functionaries. Their powers are both derived from the same source—the constitution; in which the functions of electors and of the magistrates, whether elected or appointed, are defined and limited. But the ability and integrity of the magistracy, depend either mediately or immediately upon the judgment and care, with which the electors choose their candidates and cast their votes; for every magistrate is either elected or appointed by some one or more, who are elected. The electors possess no constitutional control over those whom they elect, during the term of office. With the election, their function *pro hac vice* ceases. It is simply the power to choose from among their fellow-citizens, qualified according to the constitution, such as they think best fitted for the offices created by that fundamental ordinance. The nature of the offices, and the duties of those who hold them, are prescribed by the same supreme law. It is to this, as the real voice of the people, not to the electors who are like themselves, the agents only of the people, that the constituted authorities, of whatever

department, are to look for instructions with respect to their duty. Upon this point, which is so simple and tangible, our political ethics are strangely defective ; and when some American Paley shall hereafter arise, to enlighten the nation with the principles of political philosophy, applicable to our institutions, he will set the seal of censure upon the prominent and leading example of a most distinguished statesman, who many years ago resigned his seat as a Senator of the United States for Massachusetts, because he could not concur with the Legislature of that State in a matter in which they had instructed him to vote.

The fact that the electors, cannot control the conduct or proceedings of those whom their suffrages have placed in authority, gives additional cogency to the obligation on their part, to choose with caution and wisdom. It is to be feared, that the nature and grounds of this obligation are not duly considered, and that many, who are exemplary in other respects, overlook the importance of a proper discharge of their electoral functions. A representative or an executive officer, who should wholly neglect or abandon his station, would be deemed to have merited the deepest censure of the community ; and yet it would be difficult to show, in what he had offended more than the elector, who wholly neglects the duty devolved upon him, as one of that body in whom the choice of the Legislature, and the chief executive, and other magistrates, is vested by the constitution.

It is related of two of the most illustrious men our country has produced, who were distinguished as well for their piety as patriotism—General Washington and the late Bishop White—that they punctually, to the end of their lives, discharged the duty of casting their votes at every general election.

It has been said, that every man owes a debt to his profession : with equal justice it may be declared, that every one owes a debt to his *education* ; and I can conceive of no better mode of discharging this debt, than by extending, as widely as possible, the blessing of education to others. You will thus evince to the world your estimation of the benefits you have received, and demonstrate that you are not actuated by a churlish and selfish satisfaction in the consciousness of your superior advantages ; but that, appreciating these, you are moved by the generous wish, that they should be universally enjoyed. Opportunities will frequently present themselves of inculcating your views. You will meet with parents who have the means of liberally educating their children, but who think that they will do them a greater favor, by bestowing these means in the shape of money and land. Convince them of their error. Show them that no possessions are more precarious than riches, which, unless the gift be accompanied by prudence and judgment in the use, are more



likely to prove a bane than a blessing, whilst they last, and, when they take to themselves wings, leave behind, with ignorance, a train of vices that are sure to entail disgrace and misery upon the unfortunate possessor, or, at best, leave him without resource or solace in his unmitigated distress; whereas EDUCATION is a security in prosperity, as well as the means of attaining it—a friend in adversity that the malice of evil fortune cannot alienate; a friend, ready with expedients to repel misfortune, or to soften and shorten its visitations.

You will meet with sons to whom the choice may have been unwisely committed, whether to obtain an education or not. Point them to the eminences of public and private life, and ask them if they have no desire to render themselves worthy of those high places. Point them to the honors achieved in every walk and profession, and tell them the shortest and surest approach to these, is through the classic portals of education. Tell them of the men who have illumined and adorned the ages in which they flourished, and whose names, triumphant over fate, shine as glittering lights “in the dark backward, and abysm of time:”

“ Their ashes rest in peace; eternal Fame  
Sounds wide their praise.”

If they would emulate those bright examples, exhort them to pursue with diligence the only means by which they may accomplish their generous purpose, a learned and virtuous education.

A few years will place some of you in the halls of the Legislature, and bring you to reflect upon the intimate and necessary connexion, between the diffusion of knowledge and the prosperity of the country. The fundamental principle of our civil polity—the sovereignty of the people, refers all power to whom God has given it—the MANY, not the few. It places the pyramid on its base, whereas the sovereignty of a monarchy, or an aristocracy, reverses the order of nature, and turns it upon its apex. It recognises, as essential, popular representation, equality of civil and political rights, and religious freedom. These institutions were the purchase of our Revolution, and were achieved more by the intelligence than the valor of our fathers, though their valor was beyond all praise. It is only by intelligence and virtue, that they can be preserved. Let our Legislature, then, provide for the universal diffusion of knowledge. Let every citizen be instructed, so that he may be qualified, by his own independent judgment, to perform his duty as a member of the republic, and especially, in his electoral capacity, to choose the most competent men for public stations. Knowledge, to the individual, has been said to be *power*: to the people it is more; it is *liberty*. And to our State, with the boundless resources of her fertile plains and fine valleys, the

mineral abundance of her mountains, her numerous rivers and forests, knowledge is wealth. Behold its fruits in the canals, railroads, turn-pikes, bridges, and other public works which traverse and adorn her territory. With such resources, and the disposition to use them, to a people enterprising, industrious, and frugal, knowledge is the most productive capital. Former Legislatures have, in these great works, erected the monuments of an enviable glory; but a nobler field remains in the improvement of our intellectual resources. The good work is already begun; may it advance, not only until every child in the Commonwealth shall receive the rudiments of learning, but until every youth shall possess the opportunity of a thorough and complete education. Pennsylvania has taken the lead in the field of internal improvement: let her not lag behind in the career of intellectual and moral cultivation. Let her endow with a liberal hand her academies, colleges, and universities, so that every son of her soil, may be trained up in all useful knowledge and accomplishments, by means of the literary institutions within her own borders. The splendid results will be exhibited in the enlightened labors of her administrative departments, in her congressional representations, in her scientific and literary bodies, and in the long list of brilliant names which she will furnish, to enhance her own reputation, and to illustrate the glory of our common country.











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